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Email submitted from: reagan@cfl.rr.com at /bicy/parkmgmt/orv-advisory-committee.htm

Mailing Address
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Dear Advisory Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the ORV Plan for Big Cypress. As a strong supporter for panther and gopher tortoise protections in our state, I feel it **CRITICAL** that existing permanent preserves not be further eroded by human-mechanical traffic such as ORVs. No matter how fun and convenient it might be for those relative few who wish to access and use ORV trails in Big Cypress, compromising the "pristine" viability of the habitat for our most endangered animals---and few species are more globally imperiled than Puma concolor coryi---is not justified just to provide that "fun". It amounts to turning over critical habitat to willy-nilly recreational use that is demonstrably harmful---whereas protecting panther (and other imperiled animal habitat) is **MANDATED** on the federal level under the Endangered Species Act, and thus **IS** the priority obligation of any advisory body. All bodies deciding recreational use on public lands housing imperiled biota have to weigh seriously the real-life impacts to that biota as the first priority; human fun and convenience ipso facto come a distant second. I believe no preserve land housing rarities like the panther should be open to vehicle use, period; but only to passive recreation.

It is not fair to the Florida (or American) public to expand in any way shape or form, recreational vehicle use in the Big Cypress Preserve wilderness. Primary and secondary (access) trails (whichever ones exist now, are already done deals) should be kept well confined to certain areas that do not compromise the main habitat, and use of such vehicles monitored closely for abuses and violative "bushwhacking" of unofficial "trails" into the rest of the preserve. There is no credible justification for expansion of trails or relaxing of existing restrictions.

I oppose any plan which expands ORV vehicle use beyond that allowed now by law. It in perpetuity should be kept to a bare minimum because of the direct deleterious impact to panthers, gopher tortoises and other protected animals which rely on intact habitat to survive.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Eagan